CHAPTER XXVIII

PEACE AND WAR

A. *Peace among Associates.*

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God." Matthew V: 9.

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Romans XII: 18.[1]

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, *not in strife and envying.*" Romans XIII: 13.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and *peace,* and joy in the Holy Ghost.

"For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

"*Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace,* and things wherewith one may edify another." Romans XIV: 17-19.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsufferings, forbearing one another in love;

"Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

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"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

"Neither give place to the devil.

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[1] See also verses 19, 20.

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephesians IV: 1-3, 26, 27, 31, 32.

* * *

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

"And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." Colossians III: 12-14.

* * *

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you." II Corinthians XIII: 11.

* * *

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Hebrews XII: 14, 15.

* * *

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

"Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts." James IV: 1-3.

* * *

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

"Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

"For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." James I: 17-20.

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

"Behold, we put bits in the horses's mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

"Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

"For every kind of beast, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

"But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

"Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

"Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

"Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

"Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

"For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

"And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." James III: 1-18.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

"Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

"Let him eschew evil, and do good; *let him seek peace, and* ensue it." I Peter III: 8-11.

B. *The Consequences of War.*

"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb; and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

"And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzlebub the prince of the devils.

"And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, *Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand*:

"And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?" Matthew XII: 22-26.[2]

"And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

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[2] See also Luke XI: 17, 18.

"Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: *for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*" Matthew XXVI: 51, 52.

"He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." Revelation XIII: 10.

Commentary

One of the greatest sources of human waste is the time and energy that have been given to personal quarrels, to group bickerings, and to wars, both civil and international. This economic loss is, however, small in comparison with the misery produced and the injustice too often wrought.

Two of the major aims of life are to secure, first, the highest degree of justice in all social relations, and second, the maximum of joy to each individual. The two are, of course, interrelated; social justice is a major factor in securing joy to each member of society.

There may be circumstances where social justice can be obtained only by unpleasant controversy or even by physical force. Substitution of physical force for justice is, however, a very great injustice; and substitution of unpleasant controversy for friendly discussion of differences is, as a rule, but a hindrance to a fair settlement of those differences. On the other hand, a disposition to be fair is favorable to peace, and, when manifest by all concerned, is, practically, a guarantee of peace.

In personal relations idle gossip is one of the greatest disturbers of the peace. The tongue is truly "an unruly evil, full of deadly poison," when it becomes the instrument of expressing irresponsible thoughts about persons. This human tendency may be overcome through education; in part, perhaps, by direct suppression, but chiefly by cultivating the habit of talking of matters of public concern and impersonal things, or of the *good* that is found in particular persons. The evil is not corrected by gossip about its possessor. One who would undertake to cure an evil in another may do well to heed the admonition of Jesus, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone."[3]

In case of international relations, ignorance and selfishness, with their false, narrow patriotism, are the great disturbers of the peace. The remedy, of course, lies in removing the causes; this can best be done by substituting their opposites as fast as these can be developed. In all individual and group relations within a state or nation substitution of physical force for justice is strictly forbidden by law. No one may lawfully be an aggressor in such an action. This principle is generally accepted among civilized peoples. The process of extending the applications of this moral principle to international relations has, thus far, been very slow and subject to occasional lapses. As nations become both enlightened and unselfish, however, progress in this extension of moral principles should be very greatly accelerated. This is the hope of the advocates of adherence to the International Court of Justice, outlawing of war, and similar political measures.

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[3] Matthew XVIII: 15-17.

PROBLEMS

1. What is implied in the beatitude, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called *the Children of God?*"

2. What are the consequences, physical, mental, and moral, of *strife* and *envying?*

3. What is the relationship (a) between peace and good will or love of neighbor? (b) between peace and justice?

4. (a) What are the social consequences of harboring anger and ill will?

   (b) What are the consequences to the individual who is possessed by such feelings?

5. Under what conditions may the tongue be a disturber of the peace?

6. What are the essential conditions of peace (a) in the family, (b) in the neighborhood, (c) in the state and nation, (d) in international relations?

7. What can you do now to bring about conditions favorable to the promotion of peace?

CONCLUSION

The religion of the New Testament is a very practical one. Its divinity but strengthens and reinforces its humanity. Those who may be skeptical in their attitude toward anything beyond that type of experience with which natural science deals may nevertheless find in the New Testament ample materials for a religion of humanity, comprehended in the love of neighbor, with all that this implies.

It will be noted in some of the quotations that very great emphasis is given to the humane element in conduct. This quality of character is entitled to a preeminent place in personality. Since, however, social and political conditions have changed radically since New Testament times, the manifestations of love of neighbor are, in some respects, quite different. There is still need of that humaneness that is expressed in visiting the sick and providing for the poor and the oppressed. The greater task, however, now confronting mankind, is the removal of the causes of sickness, poverty, and oppression. These are social and civic problems that call for intelligent cooperative effort of all citizens. "Prevention is better than cure," is an axiom that applies to social no less than to individual ills. Moral activity directed at prevention of ills is, therefore, of greatest worth.

Cultivation of good will toward fellow men, accompanied by intelligent effort to secure social justice and otherwise to be of greatest service to immediate associates, community, and humanity, is descriptive of the moral duty of men and women today.

That devout religious spirit which, in New Testament times, prompted its possessors to give to the begging leper by the wayside now prompts citizens by cooperative action to build leper hospitals where these unfortunates may be comfortable for the remainder of their lives, while every effort is also made to discover a cure for the hitherto incurable. It has also become a prime moral and civic duty of modern men to cultivate and, if necessary, enforce by law, such a spirit of justice and tolerance that innocent persons will not be in prisons, and even guilty ones will have humane treatment and opportunity for restoration to normal social life. There is likewise the civic duty of providing industrial or social insurance, widows' pensions, free public education, and other similar measures in justice to all. Were such provision made, the widow and the fatherless would have less need of that charity which is manifest in providing material aid to the destitute.

In other words, because social life has become very complex and knowledge of this life and its problems has increased, different remedies for social ills are called for. The development of the sciences and the social studies is rapidly providing these remedies, which, in large measure, have to be administered by social institutions. These institutions, therefore, are called upon, as are individuals, to sense their moral obligations and to exercise moral functions. This has long been true of the family; it was true of Ancient Israel as a nation, as is clearly indicated in the

Old Testament. It was also true, in some degree at least, of the primitive Christian Church. There developed later, however, a marked tendency toward asceticism. The individual withdrew from social institutions and from the practical affairs of social life. His moral life became identified with individual piety, in which self-discipline and the contemplative virtues were predominant. While with this tendency was developed a keen sense of the worth of the individual soul, this gain was not without great loss on the social side.

A soul out of relation with other souls and with the ongoing stream of humanity, is after all a poor soul—poor in both the content of its own life and also in its contribution to the life of mankind.

This ascetic type of individualism was later lost in ecclesiastical institutionism and nationalism. In modern times, however, there arose in opposition to institutionalism a philosophical individualism, which regarded each person as an independent unit of society practically free from obligations to fellow men, except as such obligations were voluntarily assumed. This gave rise to the contract theory of the state, to the doctrine of the natural and inalienable rights of the individual, and to the conception of government as concerned only or chiefly with protection of the individual in his natural and inalienable rights—negative justice.

The tendency of contemporary ethics is to regain the social values lost through the prevalence of early medieval asceticism and modern individualism; but at the same time to retain keen appreciation of the value of the individuals of which society is composed. Society cannot develop morally apart from persons or in opposition to their highest good. Persons, on the other hand, cannot attain the highest moral development except through their cooperative activities as members of social institutions. In and through it all respect for personalities is a major factor in securing social justice and progress.

Respect for personalities consists not only in regarding each person as an end in himself but also in seeking to discover the potentialities of each individual and providing the most favorable conditions for developing these potentialities, so that each person may realize what is for him the highest type of character and the greatest degree of social usefulness. It is the chief function of social institutions to provide these opportunities for individual development. The efficiency of social institutions, however, depends, in the main, upon the character and the social usefulness of their individual members. Thus each in turn, the institution and the individual, may contribute to the development of the other; or the degeneracy of the one may contribute toward the degeneracy of the other. An individual who is absorbed in his own personal piety, for instance, may through mere neglect, be responsible for low standards of family and civic life. These low institutional standards may then react upon him, and though they may fail to break through his shell of personal piety, they will at least greatly endanger the standards of members of his family, his neighbors, and his fellow citizens. It is evident, then, that while personal piety may be an element in goodness, it is in itself very inadequate to the demands of modern life, if not, indeed, of any social life whatsoever. There is call for individuals who are personally good, to be sure, but who are also good for something—positive, aggressive personalities who fully sense their social as well as their personal responsibilities, persons who have social initiative, or who, at least, have judgment to recognize and to follow competent moral leadership in the various social institutions of which they are members.

As social institutions attain a higher state of usefulness and individuals, thus aided, realize higher ideals, the general level of a community is raised to a higher plane. This is social progress—the goal of both individual and community endeavor. Since, however, the essential element in this progress is moral, and therefore includes good will toward all mankind, no community can properly be content with its own attainments. Such a condition would correspond to selfish individual piety. To be really moral a community must sense its obligations and responsibilities as one unit in the larger life of mankind. As no individual can live to himself alone, so can no community segregate its life from the great ever ongoing life of humanity. Community and national selfishness are to be classified morally with individual selfishness. Neither has any sort of justification in Christian morals. The Christian ideal will be realized only when both individuals and communities extend freely the neighborly hand of sympathy and helpfulness to all other individuals and communities.

APPENDIX A

SOCRATES AND JESUS

It may be of interest to review briefly the outstanding characteristics of the chief initiator of ethical theories in the one case, and the author of the religious system of the New Testament in the other; i. e., Socrates, Father of Ethics, and Jesus, Founder of Christianity.

By birth and training Socrates was thoroughly Greek; Jesus was of Jewish lineage and brought up under Jewish influence. Each devoted his life to the moral and spiritual uplift of his own people; the labors of each brought upon himself condemnation to death.

Socrates, however, lived to the age of three score and ten, when he was condemned to a rather peaceful manner of death, as he had, in general, lived a rather peaceful manner of life, notwithstanding his domestic disturbances and his participation as a soldier in his country's wars.

Jesus was crucified at the early age of thirty-three, after a brief three years of public teaching, characterized by many occasions of threatening violence. Had it not been for the restraining power of the Roman rulers of Judea it is quite probable that his teaching career might have been even more shortened by the Jews, who were at various times ready to stone him to death for blasphemy or other violation of the Laws of Moses.

Socrates was confronted with two diverse sorts of opposition, the conservative element, who adhered to old Greek traditions and beliefs, on the one hand; and the radical, skeptical Sophists, on the other. He brought upon himself the enmity of both because he was too enlightened to agree with the conservatives and had too much faith in human nature and the powers of the human mind to agree with the skepticism of the Sophists. Between these two millstones he was ultimately crushed, but his faithful disciples, made doubly faithful and energetic by the tragic death of their master-teacher, carried on the cause for which he gave his life. His teachings were so broad and many sided and so free from dogmatic assertions that his pupils developed very different notions of his teachings and so developed very divergent systems of ethics.

The opposition to Jesus came in the main from the conservative, formalistic, ritualistic section of the Jewish community, the scribes and Pharisees, whose hypocrisy and unbalanced judgment of moral and religious values he vigorously condemned. It was this conservative group that finally succeeded in getting a decree from the Roman rulers to have him crucified; but again the faithful disciples took up the cause with great energy and boldness and carried it forward until it became the religion of the western world. From the teachings of Jesus, too, in the course of centuries, have arisen many divergent systems of religion.

Socrates left no writings to give first hand knowledge of his doctrines and his personality. The knowledge of these is obtained from various disciples who wrote of him and reproduced the teachings of their master. Xenophon's plain, historical account of Socrates' life and works[1] and Plato's masterful representations of his teacher in dialogue[2] are the most notable sources of information. These documents are as immortal in philosophical literature as are the Gospels in religious literature.

Jesus, likewise, so far as we know, left no written exposition of his teachings. This exposition, together with the narrative of his life, became the task of his disciples, some of whom had first hand knowledge of his personality and had themselves listened with eagerness and sympathy to his marvelous discourses, his parables, and his discussions with opponents.

Socrates was often restrained from wrong doing by a voice within him which he regarded as a spiritual guide and apparently of a more supernatural order than the voice of conscience.

Jesus, through his ministry, affirms supernatural authority for his teaching as represented in that saying, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."

Socrates affirmed his belief in God and immortality, apparently on philosophical grounds, which were later more fully developed by Plato and Aristotle.

Jesus embodied these beliefs as fundamental principles of the religion he taught.

Socrates and Jesus were alike in their indifference toward the accumulation of wealth and the pursuit of world honors. Their interests were in each case centered upon the pursuit of moral and spiritual truth—the truth that makes men free by redeeming them from the bondage of ignorance and wrong doing.

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[1] Xenophon, Symposium, and Memorabilia of Socrates.

[2] Plato, Dialogues, especially the Apology, Phaedo, Crito, Charmides, Lysis, Laches, and Symposium. Jowett's translation recommended.

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INDEX

(This index has no reference to the source material, since subject index and concordance to Biblical material are easily available to all readers. Also terms that occur very frequently throughout the book; i. e. Action, Attitude, Character, Character Education, Commandments, Conduct, Ethics, God, Ideals, Jesus, New Testament, Principles, Purposes, Religion, Standards, are omitted from the index, because they constitute, in large measure, the theme of the volume.)

Accountability 114
Appreciation 117
Arbitration 115
Aristotle 45, 164, 230
Atomists School 7
Biological Inheritance 34
Bondage 19
Brotherhood 33
Business 21, 106, 122
Celibacy 194
Change 7, 8, 114
Charity 161, 162, 170, 195, 224
Children 105, 107, 167, 194, 195, 207, 208
Christian 21, 45, 46, 225, 229
Christianity 150
Church 35, 80, 86, 170, 171, 193, 194, 196, 212
Civilization 34, 35, 78
Commerce 21
Conscience 71, 78, 129, 230
Consecration 64, 66, 150
Courage, ... See Moral Courage
Covetousness 154-156, 181
Crime 106, 181
Democritus 7, 8
Diplomacy 115
Disciples 80
Divorce 192, 193, 197

Dogmatists 55
Dope Fiend 24
Doubt 47
Drunkard 24, 210
Eleatic School 7
Eliot, C. W. 100
Enlightened Self-interest 65, 66
Enthusiasm 56
Epicureans 46, 160
Evil 19, 27, 28, 56, 77, 82, 85, 113, 207, 208, 221
Family 105, 130, 167, 179, 180, 191, 193, 196, 197, 207, 208, 214, 224, 226
Fiske, J. 191
Flux 7, 9, 11
Forgiveness 112-115, 195, 213
Formalism 71, 229
Freedom 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 45, 48, 87
Fruit 70, 71, 107, 117
Gambling 181
Good 11, 28, 64, 76, 77, 82, 85, 97, 105, 113, 208
Good Will 70, 81, 98, 99, 106, 107, 113, 180, 207, 208, 223, 227
Goodness 20, 227
Government 106, 123, 211-213, 215
Gratitude 116-118
Greek 9, 47, 148, 164, 168, 228, 229
Happiness 81, 99, 100
Hate 70, 107, 112, 115, 129
Hebrews 149
Home 86
Honesty 21, 70
Hospitality 160-162
Human Welfare 20, 71, 80, 92, 98, 130, 134, 151, 167, 211-213
Humanity 25, 65, 117, 123, 134, 224, 225, 227
Hume 48
Humility 53, 54, 130
Hypocrisy 129, 130, 150
Immoral 81

Immortality 45, 48
Individual Differences 9-11
Individuality 77
Individualism 122, 123, 225
Industry 21, 106, 170-172
Instability 123
Intermediate Position 10
International Court of Justice 115, 221, 222
Intolerance 35
Jacob 122
Jewish Law 215
Judgment 209, 210
Judicial Procedure 211
Justice 21, 134, 155, 161, 209, 213, 220, 223-226
Kant 47, 48, 71, 98, 99, 105
Kindness 129, 130
Kinship 35, 36
Knowledge 70, 78, 99, 121, 213, 229
Labor 106, 170, 171
Law 70, 85, 86, 92, 99, 151, 180, 192, 193
212, 213, 224
Laws of Health 20
Laws of Nature 20
Legislation 106
Liberty 65
Logic 11, 12
Love 97, 98, 101, 105-107, 112, 113, 115, 179,
194, 208, 223
McKenzie, J. 45
Marriage 191-197
Mill, J. S., ... 70, 99
Moral Courage 114, 148-150, 152, 213
Moral Faith 123
Moral Growth 12, 76, 78, 87
Moral Judgment 70, 78, 151
Moral Laws 8, 12, 14, 46, 195
Moral Life 77, 117, 123
Moral Obligations 14, 22, 35, 66, 77, 78, 117, 134,
161, 196, 211, 224, 225

Moral Values 71
Mosaic Code or Law........27, 150, 195, 228
Mosaic Period 12
Moses 194, 211
Motives 69, 71, 115
Nonresistance 207, 213
Old Testament 27, 149, 225
Parent 105, 107
Parmenides 7, 8
Paul 13, 21, 35, 86, 165, 170, 171, 181, 193, 194, 197, 210, 211
Paulsen, F., ... 70
Peace 35, 220
Perfection 84, 99
Permanence 7-10
Personality 77, 78, 106, 107, 162, 209, 226, 227, 229
Peter 21, 135, 149, 193, 197
Pharisees 53, 76, 91, 131, 150, 229
Philosopher........7, 13, 46, 47, 105, 122
Philosophy 7, 8, 35, 45, 48, 65, 155
Plato 35, 45, 230
Pragmatic Method 7, 71, 72
Pride 55
Progress 20, 24, 34, 45, 48, 55, 56, 64, 76, 77, 123, 129-131, 152, 156, 179, 226, 227
Prohibition Law 85
Property 70, 81, 178-181
Prostitution 106
Punishment 213
Reform 10
Retribution 207, 213
Right 28, 54, 100, 101, 115, 130
Righteous 64
Righteousness 20, 28, 56
Roman Law 150, 211, 215
Royce, J., ... 65
Rules 91
Sabbath 90, 150
Salvation 34, 64, 66, 150

Scientific Knowledge 11, 20, 21, 33
Scientist 12, 55
Selfishness 106
Self-righteous 81, 92
Service 64, 65, 77, 78, 117, 121, 122, 130, 172, 223
Seth, J. 45
Simple Life 161
Sin 76, 113, 210, 211
Sincerity 128-131
Skepticism 123, 229
Skeptics 9, 46, 47
Slavery 24, 105, 106, 167
Social Inheritance 34
Social Organism 35
Socrates 10, 46, 47, 122, 212, 228-230
Solidarity 34-36, 134
Sophists 9, 10, 46, 47, 122, 229
Spiritual Values 8, 25, 27, 34
Stability 121-123
State 35, 115, 155, 196, 212, 215
Stoics 46, 155
Suspended Judgment 54, 55
Temperance 164-168
Temptation 84-87
Theologians 55, 208
Theology 28, 46, 98
Thought 9, 27, 65, 69, 77, 82, 151, 160
Tolerance 113, 224
Trustworthiness 134-136
Truth 19-21, 23, 24, 53, 54, 56, 63, 81, 101, 134, 231
Truthful 21, 22, 70
Unstable 122
Utilitarianism 99, 179, 180
Vices 13, 24, 85, 210
Virtues 13, 54, 116, 148, 210
Vocation 121, 122, 171, 172
Wrong 81, 82, 84-86, 115, 211, 213, 231
Xenophon 230